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President:	Mr. Chowdhury	(Bangladesh)
Members:	Argentina	Mr. Listre
	Canada	Mr. Vamos-Goldman
	China	Mr. Wang Yingfan
	France	Mr. Doutriaux
	Jamaica	Miss Durrant
	Malaysia	Mr. Hasmy
	Mali	Mr. Ouane
	Namibia	Mrs. Ashipala-Musavyi
	Netherlands	Mr. Hamer
	Russian Federation	Mr. Granovsky
	Tunisia	Mr. Jerandi
	Ukraine	Mr. Yel'chenko
	United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland	Sir Jeremy Greenstock
	United States of America	Ms. Soderberg

Agenda

The situation in Sierra Leone

Third report of the Secretary-General on the United Nations Mission in Sierra Leone (S/2000/186)

00-33995 (E)

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The meeting was resumed at 3.25 p.m.

Mrs. Ashipala-Musavyi (Namibia): At the outset let me thank the Secretary-General for the report he has circulated to us and also thank Mr. Annabi for the remarks he made introducing this report. The report of the Secretary-General clearly indicates to us the progress that has been achieved since the deployment of the United Nations Mission in Sierra Leone (UNAMSIL) and the problems that exist. It also provides us with proposals for how to move forward. We are very grateful for these. We also want to thank Ambassador Greenstock for the briefing he gave us.

The people of Sierra Leone have experienced unimaginable horrors. Only a process of reconciliation, accompanied by the demobilization of combatants and military integration, can help instil peace and security in Sierra Leone. We therefore thank those who are helping with this difficult process, and we welcome UNAMSIL's readiness to assist in this regard.

The security situation certainly worries our delegation. In this connection, it should be emphasized that it is very important to ensure that peacekeeping operations are always carried out under appropriate mandates and that the size and strength of the force is commensurate with the problem. We think that these two go together. It is one thing to have the appropriate mandate, but if the size does not conform, then this in itself presents a problem.

The fact that the areas with extensive UNAMSIL patrols are seeing improved security, in our view, speaks volumes. We understand from the report that the conflict had a major impact on institutions of law and order. In this regard, we appeal to the international community to assist Sierra Leone in the training of police as well as in providing essential facilities and equipment. The work of UNAMSIL and the Commonwealth Police Task Force in this field is highly commendable.

In all conflict situations, the disarmament, demobilization and reintegration process has proved to be the most difficult. Indeed, it depends not only on the commitment of the parties but also on the extent of support from the international community. The programme by UNAMSIL for the disposal of arms and ammunition, to be commenced soon, should therefore be assisted.

Similarly, we welcome the launching of the community rehabilitation and reintegration programme, and we thank the World Bank and the African Development Bank for their contribution to this programme. It is programmes such as this one which will serve as incentives for ex-combatants to surrender their weapons, despite the reluctance of their leaders.

The report clearly points out that the disarmament, demobilization and reintegration (DDR) process is being set back by the Revolutionary United Front (RUF). We need to examine how UNAMSIL can maximize its progress in this area. Hence, and as the Secretary-General clearly proposes in his report, one of the main priorities for the United Nations in Sierra Leone remains the speedy establishment of a credible peacekeeping presence throughout the country to create the necessary climate of confidence and security conditions for the implementation of various aspects of the peace process. The report also points out, in a very clear manner, the impediments to the DDR programme, which need to be examined further.

Our delegation believes that we have a real chance to succeed here and so we must at all costs avoid repeating the experience we had in Angola with regard to the DDR of UNITA combatants. Here again we believe that some collective thinking needs to be exercised and past experience taken into account.

We note that the human rights situation is most disturbing in the RUF-held areas. We wish to underscore that the perpetrators of violence against civilians and aid workers are not covered by the amnesty under the Lomé Agreement, as mentioned in the report. Here again we commend UNAMSIL for its work in the area of human rights.

Furthermore, we concur with the steps proposed by the Secretary-General. Indeed, the early disarmament, demobilization and reintegration of all ex-combatants; the extension of State authority, including law enforcement, throughout the country; national reconciliation and democratization; and the improvement of Sierra Leone's capacity to ensure its own security is what is needed to restore peace and stability to Sierra Leone.

With regard to national reconciliation and democratization, we support the steps proposed by the Secretary-General. We wish to underline that for national reconciliation and democratization to prosper in Sierra Leone, all parties, especially the RUF, should cooperate, and the international community should lend its assistance in this regard.

Namibia supports the proposed donor conference, scheduled for 27 March this year in London, and we call on all to contribute generously. We thank the United Kingdom Government for this initiative.

We commend the Special Representative of the Secretary-General, Mr. Adeniji, the men and women of UNAMSIL, and the personnel of the Economic Community of West African States (ECOWAS) Monitoring Group (ECOMOG) for their courageous work in Sierra Leone.

Finally, our thanks go to all those countries that contribute troops to UNAMSIL, and we also are in agreement with the proposal that you, Mr. President, speak to the press after this meeting.

Mr. Jerandi (Tunisia) (*spoke in French*): I should like to begin by thanking Mr. Hedi Annabi for introducing the third report of the Secretary-General on the United Nations Mission in Sierra Leone (UNAMSIL), which gives a comprehensive account of the situation prevailing in the country and identifies the challenges to be faced in order to complete the peace process successfully, as well as the steps to be taken in order to act effectively to meet those challenges.

My delegation supports Mr. Annabi's suggestion that the report henceforth be published every 60 days.

In this regard, my delegation notes with satisfaction the progress that has been made in the political area in the implementation of the provisions relating to governance.

Here we would like to point out the need to speed up this process so as to establish and put into effective operation, as soon as possible, the National Electoral Commission and the Commission for the Management of Strategic Resources, National Reconstruction and Development.

However, we are bound to acknowledge that the situation in Sierra Leone, because of its continuing precariousness, is still profoundly disquieting, in particular with respect to the manifest reluctance of Mr. Sankoh to cooperate in implementing the Peace Agreement. Here we reaffirm Tunisia's commitment to the full and early implementation of the provisions of that Agreement, which offers a genuine chance for salvation to the people of Sierra Leone, who have already endured such hardship and who continue to be the victims of a tragedy of vast humanitarian, social, economic and political dimensions.

My delegation would like to express its profound concern at the failure by the rebels to respect their commitments, undertaken voluntarily in the framework of the Lomé Agreement. We feel that it is essential for them, and in particular for Mr. Sankoh and his party, to fulfil their responsibilities vis-à-vis their people and their country in good faith, especially since Mr. Sankoh now bears a post of responsibility of high importance in the Government.

In this regard, we deem it necessary for the Security Council to continue to exert pressure on the recalcitrant parties and to indicate, as firmly and forcefully as possible, its commitment to securing a return to peace, security and stability in the country, in accordance with the provisions of the Peace Agreement. This commitment is all the more pressing because the barriers placed in the way of humanitarian assistance and the obstacles impeding the implementation of the disarmament, demobilization and reintegration programme, as well as the obstructive manoeuvres to impede UNAMSIL's activities and attacks on personnel of the Mission, have become daily occurrences.

My delegation in this regard would like to underscore the pertinent nature of the steps suggested by the Secretary-General in part VII of his report, which are aimed at creating a climate of confidence and the necessary conditions for the implementation of the various aspects of the peace process. The proposals by the Secretary-General deserve our full support, and we should all do our utmost to see them put into effect.

The following steps seem to us to be most urgent in this regard: the rapid establishment of an effective peacekeeping force throughout the territory; the provision to peacekeeping troops of the necessary equipment to permit them to carry out their mandate properly and command the necessary credibility; strict respect for the rules of engagement by UNAMSIL troops; the speeding up of the deployment in the field of the police officers provided for in resolution 1289 (2000), and, as necessary, an increase in their personnel in the light of the needs perceived in this area; an increase in financial assistance to Sierra Leone; and, lastly, support by the Security Council for the efforts deployed by the President of Mali, Mr. Alpha Oumar Konaré, current Chairman of the Economic Community of West African States — efforts which attest to the importance that western Africa, and Africa in general, attaches to the situation in Sierra Leone.

My delegation believes that the question of development, including the right of the people of Sierra Leone to development, should be one of the priorities of the Sierra Leone peace process in view of the close link between development and lasting peace, as was stated so eloquently by the Secretary-General in his report on the causes of conflict and the promotion of lasting peace and sustainable development in Africa.

In our opinion, focusing on development in Sierra Leone not only will contribute to the successful implementation of the demobilization and reintegration programme for former combatants, but will also help to resettle refugees and displaced persons in their country and to steel Sierra Leoneans against any temptation to rally behind the forces of destruction.

Since there is no need for further proof of the link between peace and development, particularly with regard to internal conflicts, it seems to us appropriate for the Security Council to envisage including a reference to this question in its resolutions and statements dealing with this type of conflict.

I also wish to thank the Ambassador of the United Kingdom for the first-hand information he gave us concerning his recent trip to the country. I endorse his suggestion regarding a statement to the press by the President of the Council.

Mr. Listre (Argentina) (*spoke in Spanish*): First of all, we would like to thank Mr. Annabi for the very comprehensive information he gave us in his introduction of the latest report of the Secretary-General.

We are also grateful for the first-hand information that Ambassador Greenstock shared with us. That information gave us an eloquent and precise picture of the overall situation in Sierra Leone.

We cannot conceal the fact that the content of the report of the Secretary-General is a source of concern to us. What emerges from it is a lack of commitment to the Lomé Agreement on the part of Foday Sankoh, the Revolutionary United Front (RUF) and the rebel forces in general. That lack of commitment takes specific forms: first, continued attacks on the civilian population by the rebel forces; secondly, not only hostile rhetoric against the presence of the United Nations Mission in Sierra Leone (UNAMSIL), but also serious acts of violence against its personnel and equipment; and thirdly, slowness in the disarmament, demobilization and reintegration process, largely due to the rebels' lack of cooperation.

We wish to reaffirm categorically our absolute condemnation of violations of human rights carried out by the rebel forces. The amnesty agreed in the Lomé Agreement does not cover crimes committed since its signature. Moreover, crimes against humanity cannot be exempted because they are offences against the collective conscience of mankind.

Attacks against the personnel of UNAMSIL are unacceptable. We have been aware since the beginning that the personnel of UNAMSIL could face a hostile environment. In that context, we believe that Chapter VII of the Charter and the rules of engagement should be applied very rigorously. Otherwise, UNAMSIL will be prevented from fulfilling its mandate. We do not call for absolute security assurances, but neither do we believe that UNAMSIL personnel should be exposed to disproportionate risks. This could ultimately affect the viability of the Mission.

Given the situation described, the sanctions regime imposed by the Security Council should be applied firmly. In this regard, we agree with what is said by the Secretary-General at the end of paragraph 49 of his report concerning the possibility of considering measures to put an end to illegal diamond sales. In this connection, the exceptional work done by Ambassador Fowler in the context of the sanctions regime imposed on UNITA might serve as a valuable model.

Notwithstanding the difficulties that it indicates, the report of the Secretary-General also shows that the expansion of UNAMSIL has begun to have positive effects. The distribution of humanitarian assistance has improved within its area of deployment, as has the human rights situation. We hope that the deployment of the 11,000 members of UNAMSIL throughout the country, and particularly in those areas under rebel control, will have a significant stabilizing effect. We once again reiterate that for that deployment to be possible it is necessary for the very parties that in the Lomé Agreement called for the presence of UNAMSIL — and I refer to the rebels — comply fully with the commitments they undertook in July 1999 and that they guarantee the security and freedom of movement of United Nations personnel.

Finally, we wish to express our agreement with the priorities set out by the Secretary-General in part VII of

his report: rapid implementation of the disarmament process, the extension of State authority throughout the territory of Sierra Leone, the national reconciliation process and the creation of a professional army and police force. However, in order to achieve this there is a need for a clear commitment to peace on the part of all the parties, in particular the rebel forces.

In closing, I would like to raise two points. First, we agree with the request made by Mr. Annabi that the report of the Secretariat be presented every 60 days, instead of every 45. We know that the Department of Peacekeeping Operations has too few personnel to carry out the tasks we have given it. We also know that it does remarkable work, for which we are very grateful.

Lastly, we approve the elements for a statement to the press proposed by Ambassador Greenstock.

Ms. Soderberg (United States of America): I want to thank Mr. Annabi not only for his briefing today but also for the amount of time and energy he and his staff have put into trying to give the United Nations operation in Sierra Leone the ability to carry out the mandate that the United Nations has given it. It is a very difficult Mission, and they certainly deserve our full support in their efforts. I think it is one of the most difficult missions out there today and one that deserves the full attention of the Council.

I appreciate the holding of this briefing today, and I think we should all commend Ambassador Greenstock for taking the time to go to Sierra Leone. There is nothing like seeing the situation on the ground. I think it is informative. I myself was there about six months ago. You cannot come back from a trip like that and not determine to do everything you can to try to help ameliorate the situation. I certainly share Ambassador Greenstock's view that the people of Sierra Leone are committed to achieving the peace that they so rightly deserve. I think it is incumbent on all of us to do what we can to give it to them.

I would underscore what others have said, and certainly the Secretary-General's report and Mr. Annabi's briefing. But I think it boils down to two real problems in Sierra Leone. One is the failure of Foday Sankoh to live up to his commitments in the peace process. From that failure stems a myriad of problems that we are dealing with. But until he begins to live up to the commitments that he has made, as well as the Revolutionary United Front (RUF), the mission given by the Security Council to UNAMSIL is not going to be fulfilled. I would certainly join the Secretary-General and others in calling on Foday Sankoh to abide by his commitments.

Looking at the Secretary-General's report, we see that he is very blunt about raising serious doubts about the commitment of Foday Sankoh to the faithful implementation of the peace accord. He is talking about the main obstacle to the extension of State authority being the continuing refusal of access by the RUF. I think it is important for us to be as blunt about this as possible, both in our private discussions with him as well as publicly. Along those lines, I would fully support the proposal for a press statement that Ambassador Greenstock put forward, which I think rightly includes a call for Foday Sankoh and the RUF to fulfil their commitments.

The second problem that we face there is the fact that the United Nations operation is not fully up and running. That is no one's fault in particular. It is just a long process. It takes several months for the United Nations to expand a mandate such as the one the Security Council gave it. I think we all need to do more within our own Governments, and in the region, to provide the resources so that they can get fully deployed. I think none of us want to see a repeat of the United Nations peacekeepers being disarmed by the RUF, as opposed to the other way around. I therefore commend the British Government for calling the donors' conference at the end of this month. I certainly hope that the Deputy Secretary-General will be in a position to go there. I think that until we have a full peacekeeping force on the ground there, it is going to be very difficult to have it carry out its mandate, much less overcome the continuing problems going on there.

I would also second something that others have said. I think we need to look at the travel restrictions on the RUF leaders. It is our strong view that such leaders should be able to travel only upon prior consent of the sanctions committee. The recent travel schedule of Mr. Foday Sankoh is one that surprised our delegation at least, and I think a number of other members of the delegations on the Security Council. I think we need to reiterate our commitment there, and I would perhaps underscore that in the press statement, if others would agree, in order to remind Member States that there are travel bans on some of these leaders.

Lastly, I will just underscore the situation on human rights in Sierra Leone, particularly with regard to women, girls and child soldiers. It is one of the more

horrific situations with respect to abuses of human rights, and I think we should remember that when we look at trying to contribute to the Trust Fund or help the United Nations mobilize. It is a very serious situation. As Ambassador Greenstock said, the world is focused on the Democratic Republic of the Congo, but the real test of the moment is whether or not Sierra Leone is going to work. It is one that we all have a responsibility in helping the parties fulfil.

Mr. Vamos-Goldman (Canada): We would also like to thank Mr. Annabi for his detailed briefing, and like previous speakers, we also have no objections to the extension of the reporting period. I would also like to thank Ambassador Greenstock for sharing his impressions so frankly with us this morning.

The modest progress made in implementing the Lomé Agreement and in establishing various bodies to that end, notably the Commission for the Consolidation of Peace and the Truth and Reconciliation Commission, gives some encouragement.

We are particularly gratified that the security, humanitarian and human rights situation in Sierra Leone has improved most in the areas of deployment of the United Nations Mission in Sierra Leone (UNAMSIL). This confirms that a robust troop commitment in support of a strong mandate is the best contribution the Council can make to individual security.

It is most important that troop-contributing countries provide their contingents with adequate equipment to use the full measure of their mandate and rules of engagement. This is particularly important in the context of sporadic acts of aggression and systematic interference by ex-rebel elements against United Nations and humanitarian personnel. We are concerned that, without an adequate resource base, UNAMSIL's ability to protect civilians may erode with future confrontations.

Canada remains concerned by persistent reports of human rights and humanitarian law violations, particularly those perpetrated by ex-Sierra Leone Army elements in the Port Loko area. All parties in Sierra Leone have an obligation to ensure the protection of civilians and the safe and voluntary return of refugees and internally displaced persons, and should recall that the amnesty provisions of the Lomé Agreement do not apply to offences committed since its signature.

All parties must refrain from interfering with the free movement of people, goods and, particularly, UNAMSIL and humanitarian personnel through the use of illegal roadblocks. Canada is gravely concerned with reports that the Revolutionary United Front (RUF) has begun laying landmines near Bendu, presumably with a view to interfering with UNAMSIL deployment to the area. This would be a basic and grievous violation of the Lomé Agreement.

As expressed by the Council in its statement of 8 March, a tangible expression of commitment to the peace process is needed from the RUF and its leader, Foday Sankoh, in the light of the group's inadequate compliance with the provisions of the Lomé Agreement. Specifically, the RUF must disclose the number of combatants under its command, as other armed factions have done, and return equipment seized from the Guinean battalion of UNAMSIL during a 10 January ambush. For his part, Mr. Sankoh must respect the travel ban provisions of Security Council resolution 1171 (1998) and refrain from making hostile public statements against UNAMSIL which, to say the very least, undermine confidence in the peace process.

While the disarmament, demobilization and reintegration programme (DDR) is making gradual progress overall, the same cannot be said for the northern and eastern parts of Sierra Leone still under RUF control. RUF obstructionism has hindered humanitarian access to some 2.6 million war-affected Sierra Leoneans and has stymied the Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees efforts to monitor and facilitate refugee returns. We urge all parties to participate fully in the DDR programme.

Finally, we agree with the elements of the statement to the press proposed by Ambassador Greenstock, including the element added by Ambassador Soderberg.

Mr. Granovsky (Russian Federation)(*spoke in Russian*): We associate ourselves with the words of gratitude addressed to Mr. Annabi and Ambassador Greenstock. We note certain progress that has been made in the implementation of the Lomé Agreement and in the deployment of the United Nations Mission in Sierra Leone (UNAMSIL) contingents in various regions of the country, including those areas where the peacekeepers of the Economic Community of West African States (ECOWAS) Monitoring Group (ECOMOG) were not deployed earlier. We hope that further expansion of United Nations presence will assist in speeding up the

return to normal life for all the citizens of Sierra Leone. We express our gratitude to the Government of Nigeria for the flexibility it has demonstrated regarding the issue of the extension of the dates for the Nigerian contingent's stay in Sierra Leone, which makes it possible to prevent a vacuum in the area of ensuring security and to establish favourable conditions for a build-up of the UNAMSIL presence.

At the same time, we are concerned by the parts of the report that refer to a dangerous trend of escalating tensions between the combatants of the Revolutionary United Front (RUF) and the UNAMSIL military personnel in the field, which has manifested itself in particular in incidents during which obstacles were created to the freedom of movement of UNAMSIL personnel and in which weapons were seized from the military personnel of the Mission.

We note that these unlawful actions follow the same type of logic as the hostile public statements of the leader of the Revolutionary United Front Party (RUFP) towards UNAMSIL, and we believe it is appropriate for the Council to warn Mr. Sankoh regarding his personal responsibility for the unpredictable consequences that such incidents may entail. The weapons must be returned to the peacekeepers. Creating obstacles to the implementation of the Mission's mandate is inadmissible.

Russia supports the Secretary-General's view concerning four key areas in which efforts should now be focused to move the peace process in Sierra Leone forward: the disarmament, demobilization and reintegration of all former combatants; the extension of State authority to the entire territory of the country, including law enforcement activity; national reconciliation and democratization; and the rebuilding of national security forces. We are convinced that progress on each of these tracks is possible solely in conditions of cooperation between the Government, the RUFP and other Sierra Leonean groups and leaders, which in the final analysis bear fundamental responsibility for the restoration of peace to the country.

We call upon them to actively cooperate with each other and with UNAMSIL in implementing the Lomé Agreement. We emphasize that it is precisely this factor, in our view, that is decisive regarding further international support for the peace process in Sierra Leone. In the light of this approach, Russia is ready to continue to render assistance to United Nations peacekeeping efforts in Sierra Leone. At present, we are at an advanced stage in our negotiations with the Secretariat regarding the allocation to UNAMSIL of a Russian air-support unit.

In expressing our satisfaction with the high level of participation by the international community in the settlement of the conflict in Sierra Leone, we take particular note of the irreplaceable role being played in this context by the leaders of States of the region and of the active and constructive policy of the current Chairman of the Economic Community of West African States, President Konaré of Mali, which have given significant impetus to efforts to strengthen peace.

In conclusion, I support the elements of the presidential statement proposed by Ambassador Greenstock.

The President: I shall now make a statement in my capacity as representative of Bangladesh.

I would like to thank the Secretary-General for his comprehensive report. We agree with the steps he has identified for the success of the peace process and with his observations contained in the report.

We would like particularly to thank Ambassador Greenstock for his statement at the outset of our debate, in which he shared with us his first-hand experience with regard to the situation as it exists now in Sierra Leone.

Bangladesh believes that overall progress has been made in Sierra Leone, despite difficulties which continue to exist. We are happy at the role played by regional countries in facilitating the implementation of the Lomé Peace Agreement. In particular, the role of President Konaré of Mali, in holding, first, the second meeting of the Joint Implementation Committee on 24 January and, then, the special meeting on 1 and 2 March.

However, as the Secretary-General has mentioned in his report, much clearly remains to be done to further the peace process in Sierra Leone. We have a number of concerns. They are in five broad areas.

First, regarding the deployment of the United Nations Mission in Sierra Leone (UNAMSIL), there have been reports of obstruction of UNAMSIL forces, seizure of arms from UNAMSIL troops and refusal to cooperate with UNAMSIL by rebel groups, in particular by elements of the Revolutionary United Front (RUF). This is totally unacceptable. UNAMSIL must have freedom of movement. All parties must also cooperate fully with

UNAMSIL during its deployment and discharge of mandate.

We believe that only the early establishment of a credible peacekeeping mission throughout the country can create the security conditions and the climate of confidence that are essential for the successful conclusion of the peace process. Since a substantial part of the deployed UNAMSIL troops are actually forces that had been with the Economic Community of West African States Monitoring Group (ECOMOG) mission, it may be important for Mr. Annabi to comment on how smooth and effective was the inclusion of ECOMOG troops in UNAMSIL operations.

Secondly, a particular concern remains about the intent and activity of the RUF, particularly its leader Mr. Sankoh. He has been quick to pledge his total commitment to the peace process, but his deeds have seldom matched his words. In recent months, his activities and those of the RUF have been particularly suspect. RUF is yet to provide a list of combatants and has handed over very few of its weapons. We understand that it possesses a credible force that can break the peace at any time. We believe that the Council should be prepared to take specific measures to force Mr. Sankoh and the RUF to comply fully with the Lomé Peace Agreement. In my capacity as the Chairman of the Sierra Leone sanctions committee, I am doing my best to enforce the sanctions imposed on Mr. Sankoh and his colleagues.

Thirdly, the slow disarmament, demobilization and reintegration (DDR) process remains a concern. The Secretary-General has mentioned in his report that the slow deployment of UNAMSIL, administrative aspects relating to the functioning of the camps and the lack of a realistic target date and awareness about the modalities of the DDR programme have all been hindrances in this regard. While improving those would help, the success of the programme will ultimately depend on the ability of the Government of Sierra Leone, through its National Commission on Disarmament, Demobilization and Reintegration and in cooperation with its national and international partners, to set up its efforts to implement all aspects of the DDR programme, which will be important.

In this regard it is also important, as the Secretary-General has also pointed out, to address the question of restructuring of the police and armed forces. Genuine DDR can be achieved only through a national process, under credible authority and with the participation of all parties. In this connection, I would like to ask Mr. Annabi whether he sees a short- or medium-term possibility of the Sierra Leonean police becoming an effective force. Is there any possibility for their deployment in the DDR sites?

Fourthly, the extension of state control over the territory of Sierra Leone is a must for a sustainable peace. This aspect is closely linked to my previous point. Unless a democratically elected national Government has administrative control over all the provinces, including the Northern and Eastern Provinces, as well as on economic activities, including the exploitation of the country's strategic resources, there cannot be a successful DDR process, reintegration of former combatants or an end to illegal mining of diamonds and other resources that continue to boost the ability of former rebels to renew hostilities. UNAMSIL, as is pointed out rightly in the report, has no mandate to step in to prevent illegal economic activities. I believe that the Council can look at this limitation closely in future.

Fifthly and finally, the continued violation of the human rights of Sierra Leoneans, including abductions, and the deteriorating humanitarian situation in the country are matters of concern. Recent reports that former rebels have committed atrocities near areas where UNAMSIL has been deployed are indicative of the relative impunity they enjoy. Also, humanitarian personnel have been obstructed and assistance has not reached people in need. We consider that these are among the priorities that need to be looked at by the Council.

In conclusion, let me thank Mr. Annabi for his excellent presentation. We agree with him about the proposal to extend the periodic reporting from 45 to 60 days.

I shall now resume my functions as President of the Security Council.

The representative of Sierra Leone has asked to speak. I invite him to make his statement.

Mr. Rowe (Sierra Leone): May I, through you, Sir, thank the Council for giving us the opportunity to speak in this meeting of the Council on the situation in Sierra Leone. It is a pleasure to see you, Sir. I would like to congratulate you on your assumption of the presidency this month and to thank you for your initiative in convening this open briefing. We believe that these meetings serve as useful barometres of the interest which the Council and the whole international community attach

to the plight of the people of Sierra Leone and their fervent hope for lasting peace.

Please allow me also to pay a tribute to your predecessor, the representative of Argentina, for directing the affairs of the Council last month.

My delegation would also like to say a word of welcome to Ambassador Greenstock, who has just returned from Sierra Leone. I should like to thank him sincerely for giving members of the Council a lucid and candid assessment of the current situation in our country. His remarks were an unofficial but credible addendum to the report of the Secretary-General. On behalf of my delegation, I would like to commend the United Kingdom for sending such a high-level delegation to assess the situation on the spot. This latest initiative by the Government of the United Kingdom is exemplary and timely, especially in the context of what needs to be done in facilitating the peace process.

Allow me to say a few words to Sir Jeremy about a compatriot of his. A few weeks ago I had the opportunity to travel with High Commissioner Penfold, who is fondly called "Chief Komrabai" by the people of Sierra Leone. We went to Bo, Pujehun and Kenema. Allow me to express our thanks to him. We understand that he is leaving. He has done a fantastic job, and we wish him well in his new assignment.

We have taken note of the Secretary-General's latest report, and the update provided orally to the Council by Mr. Annabi this morning, and we thank him for his clarification. We also acknowledge the general conclusion that the peace process as a whole has been slow and that there has been little progress in disarmament in the northern and eastern parts of the country. For its part, the Government of Sierra Leone has consistently demonstrated its commitment to all aspects of the peace process. Regrettably, as Ambassador Greenstock stated this morning, we cannot say the same for the other party to the Lomé Peace Agreement. Indeed, the finger should be directed at the main stumbling block, the main obstacle that stands in the way of the peace process.

That is why we welcome the Secretary-General's assessment that serious doubts remain about the commitment of the Revolutionary United Front (RUF) to the peace process. Events on the ground — as we have heard from Sir Jeremy — and certain utterances by the RUF leader, in our view, justify the observation — indeed, the conclusion — in the report that the RUF should immediately take convincing measures to dispel these doubts. In this connection, we welcome the statement which you, Mr. President, made to the press last week on behalf of the Council. In our view, it was a forthright message to Mr. Foday Sankoh to take disarmament seriously — and it is about time. The people of Sierra Leone are encouraged by this approach, which obviously complements the activities of UNAMSIL on the ground.

I should like to add that the people of Sierra Leone also welcome the firm stand which the Secretary-General's Special Representative in Sierra Leone, Ambassador Olu Adeniji, has been taking in Mr. Sankoh's encounters with the United Nations.

As part of the Government's confidence-building measures, President Kabbah recently undertook the first in a series of disarmament campaign visits to several parts of the country. He visited Bo, Pujehun and Kenema. He wanted to help break the cycle of distrust, suspicion and misconception. I want to emphasize the word "misconception", because there are certain misconceptions about the whole disarmament process. He also explained the benefits of disarmament, demobilization and reintegration of ex-combatants. In the areas he visited, and in response to his appeal, there was an impressive disarmament exercise by the Civil Defence Forces (CDF) which was not merely symbolic. The CDF told us of, and demonstrated, their willingness to disarm completely and speedily in the interests of peace in our country. We had hoped that the RUF and others would not merely reciprocate but would fulfil their obligations under the Lomé Peace Agreement.

President Kabbah has challenged all ex-combatants, wherever they are, to disarm for the good of the nation. He has challenged all the commanders to urge their men and women in arms to join in the disarmament, demobilization and reintegration (DDR). The President challenged all those who say "There is no more war in Sierra Leone" but who refuse to disarm, to remove the threat of war, namely the weapons. We hope that Mr. Sankoh and others have heard the message and will take immediate steps to accept the challenge. We also hope that he and others will heed the message which is emerging in this Council today. Mr. Sankoh should not hold the entire nation hostage. We know that thousands of former RUF fighters are ready and willing to disarm.

Disarmament and demobilization remain the highest-priority issues on the peace agenda. Disarmament and demobilization are closely linked to the question of

security in Sierra Leone, the protection of human rights, the unimpeded flow of humanitarian relief to victims of the rebel war and, of course, to the capacity of the nation to concentrate on rehabilitation and reconstruction of the economy and other aspects of the life and livelihood of the nation.

The planting season is rapidly approaching. The farmers want to go back to their farms to grow food to feed the people. How can we speak of national reconciliation when the combatants are still holding on to their weapons? How can we expect the victims of atrocities to forgive, when the perpetrators are still equipped with the weapons of war? In this regard, we fully endorse the Secretary-General's view that there is a general, clear need for all the stakeholders to agree on a realistic target date for the completion of the disarmament and demobilization of all combatants. We agree that as a first step, the RUF should provide, as a matter or urgency, full and complete information on the number of RUF combatants under its command and ensure that they comply with the DDR process. We urgently need a target date for disarmament and demobilization. The process cannot and should not be prolonged indefinitely.

The President: I thank the representative of Sierra Leone for the kind words he addressed to me and my colleagues.

I shall now give the floor to Mr. Annabi to respond to some of the comments which have been made here and the questions raised.

Mr. Annabi: I shall begin with the questions asked by the Ambassador of the Netherlands. As regards the reference in paragraph 26 of the report to the launching of a community rehabilitation and reintegration programme last month, this refers to a number of projects which include training in vocational skills and employment opportunities through the promotion of small businesses and small business credits, accelerated eduction programmes and programmes designed to encourage literacy, as well as social counselling programmes to people who may have suffered during the civil war. These projects are to be financed through the World Bank and the African Development Bank.

As regards the reference in paragraph 48 to the establishment of mechanisms to allow the Government and people of Sierra Leone to reap the benefits of the country's strategic resources, I apologize for the somewhat cryptic sentence. What it really means — and this is something that is shared by everyone — is that we would very much like to see the benefits that have been reaped from the diamond exploitation and have been used to prosecute the war now used to support the peace process and the development and reconstruction process.

The Commission for the Management of Strategic Resources, National Reconstruction and Development, which is chaired by Foday Sankoh, has been formally established, but the problem is that it has not really started working. It has not yet adopted a proper plan of action or programme of work. It has not started to follow up on the Government's own efforts in terms of taxation, legislation and various measures that are needed to control the diamond exploitation activities to ensure that these resources can be effectively put to use to support the peace process and the reconstruction process.

In response to the questions of the Ambassador of Jamaica regarding the national commission on strategic resources, I am not sure whether the reference by the Ambassador of Jamaica to hearings refers to hearings of the commission itself — I indicated that the commission had not started its work — or to the hearings held recently in the Sierra Leone Parliament. Foday Sankoh and Johnny Paul Koroma were both invited to attend hearings of the national Parliament. Mr. Koroma did attend, as requested by the Parliament, but Mr. Sankoh did not come and did not respond to the invitation extended to him.

Regarding the deployment of civilian police personnel, we hope to deploy — as members of the Council will recall — some 60 civilian police officers. I must say that we have offers for perhaps half of that number at this point. So additional offers would be welcome, and of course we will start deploying those civilian police officers from countries that have made these offers on the understanding that we need to keep an acceptable geographical balance in this regard. So we will start the deployment soon and hope to receive in the meantime additional offers from interested Member States.

The Ambassador of Jamaica also expressed concern about the withdrawal of two humanitarian organizations from Kabala and another location in the northern part of the country. While it is true that these two organizations have withdrawn as a result of the attacks by Revolutionary United Front elements against them on 7 May, my humanitarian colleagues have asked me to stress that humanitarian operations, which have been

recently established in Makeni, are continuing and that further work is being undertaken to expand humanitarian assistance wherever access becomes possible.

In regard to your own questions, Sir, on the incorporation of the ECOMOG troops, we have currently three ECOWAS countries who were participating in ECOMOG and are now providing troops to UNAMSIL: Nigeria, Guinea and Ghana. As you know, initially two Nigerian battalions were inducted into UNAMSIL. An additional two other battalions and a tank company are also in the process of being incorporated into UNAMSIL. A battalion from Ghana and a battalion from Guinea have been inducted. We are working actively with these contributors, both here and in the field, to ensure that the equipment shortfalls are met as soon as possible, so that these troops are fully equipped to perform the mandate given to them by the Security Council.

I think that the contingent for which the incorporation has been less smooth, perhaps, was the battalion from Guinea, which was not deployed as expeditiously as we had hoped. As you know, as this battalion was on its way to join UNAMSIL it allowed RUF elements to take away a large part of its weapons and equipment. So we are working on all these issues to try to improve the capacity of UNAMSIL to meet the challenges before it.

As regards the Sierra Leone police, it is a fact that their activities remain limited to the western part of the country. The police force in Sierra Leone suffered greatly from the war, and it is not that easy to recreate a police force. Nevertheless, the police are active in the western part of the country, as well as in Freetown. They very much lack the necessary equipment and other facilities that they need to be able to fulfil their tasks. Any support that may be provided by individual donors would be very much appreciated.

We hope that as access throughout the country improves and as security conditions improve, the police will be able to deploy further, with the help of the important programme of assistance that is being provided by the Commonwealth Police Task Force and by the UNAMSIL civilian police advisors that will deploy to support and advise the Sierra Leone police in their work.

I would like to thank the members of the Council for their understanding and support regarding the reporting schedule. We will therefore, with the Council's concurrence, submit the next report to the Council by 7 May, which is exactly 60 days from the last one. We will do this on the understanding, of course, that we will always be ready, on a regular basis, to provide oral updates or briefings to the Council on any significant developments that may occur.

In this connection, and to conclude, I would like to mention that Mr. Miyet, the Under-Secretary-General for Peacekeeping Operations — who is currently on an important mission in the Democratic Republic of the Congo, to prepare for the deployment of the operation authorized by the Council at the end of last month — will also visit Freetown, as part of his current trip to Africa. We expect him to arrive there over the weekend. The point of his visit is to take a firsthand look at the work of UNAMSIL and meet with all the parties concerned and see what we can all do together to further this peace process and improve its chances of success.

The President: I thank Mr. Annabi for his response to various issues raised during our debate this morning and later this afternoon. I believe that we can agree on the following course of action.

First, we can agree on a statement to the press to be made following our debate, and I will identify the elements right now. Secondly, we can agree to extend the time limit for the periodic reports from 45 to 60 days. As Mr. Annabi has said, the next report on Sierra Leone would therefore be available on 7 May.

Perhaps I can at this point identify the elements for the press statement. As many representatives have mentioned, during his presentation Ambassador Greenstock identified four elements, and subsequently Ambassador Soderberg in her statement identified two elements, which can be included in the press statement.

We will say, then, that members of the Security Council endorse, in general, the conclusions of the Secretary-General's report (S/2000/186). The second point is that the Council members place great weight on the early implementation of all aspects of the Lomé Peace Agreement and commend the efforts of the Special Representative of the Secretary-General, Mr. Oluyemi Adeniji, and of the United Nations Mission in Sierra Leone (UNAMSIL) to this end. The third element would be that Council members express their disappointment at the slow progress being made in the disarmament, demobilization and reintegration (DDR) process in particular.

The fourth element would that the Council members call upon all signatories to the Lomé Agreement, and in particular upon Chairman Sankoh and the Revolutionary United Front (RUF), to reaffirm and demonstrate their concrete commitment to the Lomé peace process by allowing the extension of State authority throughout Sierra Leone, in full cooperation with UNAMSIL and with the United Nations team as a whole, and by instructing the RUF membership to disarm and to surrender all weapons, including their heavy weapons, mines and anti-aircraft equipment.

The fifth element would be that Council members urge Member State strictly to enforce the travel ban imposed by the Council and to remind concerned Sierra Leone leaders of their obligation to obtain exemptions before travelling abroad, without exception. The final element would be that Council members welcome the upcoming donor conference in London on 27 March and urge Members to participate and contribute generously to the peace process and development efforts in Sierra Leone.

These are the elements that can be incorporated in the statement to the press after the conclusion of our meeting. I hope that this is acceptable to all.

There are no further speakers inscribed on my list.

The Security Council has thus concluded the present stage of its consideration of the item on its agenda.

The Security Council will remain seized of the matter.

The meeting rose at 4.35 p.m.